

THE VILLAGE LAD AT PLAY.

What matter that his trousers bear
A patch on either knee,
Since roses in his round cheeks glow,
While sparkling glance and light laugh show
A spirit blithe and free?

With grimy hand he knuckles down
To let a marble fly,
Intently scans the sphere's swift flight
And chuckles in his deep delight
When luck approves his eye.

No meekness guileless he
That craves a rival's blood,
As quick to share Dame Fortune's smiles
As o'er her he is to court her wiles—
A gentleman in bud.

He has not heard the city's far,
Insistent voices call,
Yet not a bird in wood or field
Nests long from his keen gaze concealed—
He knows and loves them all.

No cares oppress nor sorrows dim
The joy his projects bring.
For all life long for a day
I'd rather be that boy at play
Than president or king.

—Frank P. Kelly in Chicago Times-Herald.

HOW HE GOT A MEAL.

Drifter halted on the clubhouse steps the other night, listened patiently to a hard luck story from a beggar and gave him \$1 with the remark, "I believe you are hungry. I've been there myself. Take this and fill up."

"Why, Drifter," said his friend, when they were in a snug corner of the smoking room, "that fellow would have been just as well off with a dime as with \$1. He's blowing your money in now in some barrel house for bad whisky."

"I don't care what he does with the dollar," said Drifter. "He said he was hungry, and I could see starvation in his eyes. I know what it is to be hungry. I don't mean the hunger that comes after a good day's work, or the appetite such as you get by a tumble in the surf or by a drive in the park or a brisk walk through the fields. I mean the gnawing, sickening hunger that comes when food is in sight and you have neither money nor credit to exchange for a meal. I experienced that kind of hunger many years ago."

"This is what happened to me in a mushroom town out west," he said. "The bottom had dropped out of every deal in which I was interested. The town was absolutely flat broke. An accepted draft for \$100 on the best man in town would not buy a bite of dried buffalo meat. I had mining stock, land certificates, promissory notes and poker IOUs enough to paper this room, but I couldn't raise enough on the whole outfit to pay my hotel bill."

"You have met my friend Harry Winslow. He's made a fortune, as you know, as a contractor. At the time I speak of he was my closest chum. Harry came out to that mushroom town as a civil engineer. He was to superintend the sewerage system. We roomed together and had many good times until the bubble burst and left Harry and me stranded. Harry was flabbergasted when he learned that the time he had put in on that sewer contract was wasted and that his chances of getting paid were about as desperate as a swim across the Atlantic. I had done some roughing in my time and while I did not know so much about civil engineering as Harry did, I managed to survey the situation in our hotel and to keep the landlady in check until she quarantined us. She used to nail Harry and me at the dining room door with such pleasant shots as these:

"Well, I suppose you're coming in to eat some of the food that I owe for. If you don't pay something on account of your bill today, you can't have another meal in this house."

"That would take the edge off a man's appetite, wouldn't it? Harry staid in our room most of the time. It wouldn't do for both of us to be absent, for the landlady had threatened to grab our baggage, and Harry swore if she ever seized his outfit he'd commit suicide. I never saw such a lay out in a frontier town as that. Boston civil engineer brought with him. When he unpacked his trunks and spread out silver backed brushes, silver backed combs, silver nail sets and shoe horns and silver soapboxes and other accessories that his sister and his sweetheart in Boston had provided him with, I called him the rajah. Of clothes—why, he had no end—that is, when he arrived."

"There were two pretty girls in that hotel. They were nieces of the landlady. They simply wore themselves out taking care of Harry's elaborate outfit. Before he landed in town the dust used to be an inch thick all over that room and I might have jangled the bell until it broke without getting any attention from either of them. But with the rajah, well, it was different. They quarreled as to which one should take care of the rajah's clothes and brushes and fancy fixings. You couldn't find a speck of dust in the room with a microscope, and they put lace curtains up at the window and gave us clean towels every day. I had put up with one a week. They smuggled good lunches up to the room—for Harry, of course. The rajah spread himself out tips for those girls. Nothing was too good for them. He didn't know that the end was in sight. I managed to pick up \$600 one day down the river, and I sent it back to Harry posthaste with orders to give it to the landlady as part payment on our bill."

"When I got back to town, the landlady's reception of me told me that something was wrong. I soon found out what was up. Harry had blown in every cent of that \$600 on those two girls. Of course the landlady heard of this. I'll be hanged

if she didn't blame me for it. She told me that she would furnish no more meals for us and that if we left that room for a minute she would put a padlock on the door. And she meant it.

"Nevertheless, we fared pretty well for several days, until the landlady caught Madge, the younger girl, bringing a tray full of food up the back stairs one morning. That game was stopped. Then Susie and Harry rigged up a private wire from the window in our room and leading down stairs. Under cover of darkness Susie would steal outside, fasten to the wire a basketful of cold chicken and bread and anything else she could sneak out of the larder. Harry would haul it up, throw a kiss to Susie, and duck care would vanish for the time being. That had to end. The landlady packed the two girls off to another inn in St. Paul.

"One day while I was out hustling Harry decided that it was necessary that we should have a supply of fresh linen. Filling the clothesbag he dropped it out of the window, locked the door behind him and sauntered down stairs, trusting that he would escape the notice of the landlady. She was too quick for him. That clothesbag and its contents never reached the Chinaman, and in a jiffy there was a padlock on our door. Then we were out in the cold.

"Of course, as you can readily understand, where so many others were in the same boat we could manage to bunk somewhere, but as to food—that was another question. It was easy enough to get drinks—too easy, in fact. The crisis came one Sunday afternoon. For three days neither Harry nor I tasted food. We stood at the junction of the two principal streets and looked up and down and at each other. I gave my belt an extra hitch and tried to brace Harry up by a feeble joke. I said:

"Let's go up to English Billy's and ask him if he has got any shell oysters from Chicago. They're only \$1 a dozen."

"Oysters," moaned Harry, "why, I could eat the shells."

"That boy had a look in his face very much like that I saw in the eyes of the poor devil who begged me for food tonight. I knew that something had to be done and that at once. English Billy, who kept a restaurant and wine vault, was about the hardest customer in town when it came to asking credit. He had been particularly ugly of late. Still, we were starving, and I concluded that some of English Billy's food was just what we needed.

"Harry," I said, "we may not get another meal in a long time, but we'll have one good one on English Billy. You stick to me and don't show the white feather. Come on."

"My chum objected, and I fairly pulled him along to English Billy's. I owed Billy about \$150, and he had nearly split the bar in two when he announced that his slate was broken and that he wouldn't give his own brother a cracker to save him from starving. So when we entered the restaurant Billy must have hoped that money was in sight. I told Harry to let me do the ordering and for heaven's sake to stop shaking.

"That poor fellow was on the verge of collapse. As for me, I could have eaten the tablecloth, but there wasn't any. We started in with cocktails, got outside of some soup, and when I ordered a double porterhouse steak with mushrooms, hashed brown potatoes and canned asparagus Harry's face was a sight."

"Oh, Billy will kill us when he gets that check," he murmured.

"Well, suppose he does," I whispered. "We won't die hungry; that's one satisfaction."

"Then I ordered a couple of bottles of ale. Billy brought the ale in himself. I tried to dawdle over the meal, but it was no use. Billy could see that we were hungry. He didn't waste any words on us, but there was danger in his eyes. I was trying to gain time and had determined to make a clean breast to Billy. I concluded to stand boldly and say to him:

"When we had money, we spent it with you, Billy, and as I figure it out we are entitled to this meal. I don't know that we'll ever pay you, but we've got a meal, and if you want to fight, let's have it right here and now."

"I think my chum aged five years during that meal. When I ordered the best cigars in the house and two glasses of brandy, he leaned over and said:

"For God's sake, don't go any further, Drifter. I feel like a thief, and if Billy speaks to me I'll drop dead."

"At that moment the local express agent, a young fellow who had outgrown a swath in the town, came in and seated himself at the next table. His back was toward me, and he ordered the waiter to bring him something to eat in a hurry. Turning to me he said in a whisper:

"Say, Drifter, you did me a good turn once and got me out of a bad hole. I know I paid the money back to you, but you saved my job for the time being. I don't want to offend you, but if you can use a little money—"

"Sh! I said. 'Don't put Harry on. Use money! Why, man, this is the first meal that Harry and I have had in three days, and I've got to stand Billy up for that. Dishes and bottles will be flying in a minute, and you'd better be under cover when the time comes.'

"As quick as a flash and without

my caum seeing the movement that express agent slipped a bill in my hand.

"If you need any more," he whispered, "meet me at the station before the night train goes out. Not a word to a soul."

"I saw the figure 'one' and two ciphers. I thought I was floating on air. Calling the waiter I told him to ask Billy for a bottle of the coldest wine he had. 'Bring in four glasses,' I said, 'and tell Billy to join us, and trot out some more of those perfectos.'

"Harry couldn't raise the wine-glass to his lips. His teeth chattered when Billy sat down to the table, and Billy acted as if he were about to chew the glass.

"You ought to keep that wine a little cooler, Billy," I said.

"It has had time enough to freeze since you last bought a bottle," he replied.

"Here, waiter," I said, "take this back and bring us a colder bottle, and open a fresh box of cigars."

"Billy got up, expanded his chest and turned on his heel. Harry leaned across the table and in a voice that seemed to come from the grave said:

"I can see our finish. I hope Billy will take an ax to us and end it quick, that's all."

"My friend the agent had gone."

"Come on, Harry," I said, as I called for the check.

"Oh, Lord," said Harry, "can't we have it over in here?"

"Be a man," I said. "Make our last play in front of the bat."

"You'd have thought we were going to the gallows if you could have seen Harry's gait, and he shivered when I opened on Billy."

"Well, Billy," I remarked, "I suppose things will pick up here after awhile. I have got a lot of IOUs in my pocket. I don't suppose you'd like to take any of them for your dinner, would you?"

"Billy went up in the air. Harry staggered backward and collapsed in a chair. Of course Billy didn't stay up long. When he came down, there was fire in his eye and an ice pick in one hand. I didn't monkey any longer. I flashed the hundred under his nose and said: 'Come down on earth, Billy. I only wanted to have a little fun with you.'

"Well, I'm d—d," said Billy as he dropped the ice pick. 'Say, Drifter, if that dinner had lasted five minutes more without my seeing the color of your money, I think I would have kicked the front of this place out. Now join me in a bottle in the back room. Why, what's the matter with Harry?'

"My chum had fainted. The strain was too much for him. When we brought him around, he laughed, cried and raved about folks at home and about being hungry. He kept on ordering food and drink just as a man who was delirious from starvation would do. Billy put him to bed and sent for our friend the doctor, who fixed Harry up all right."

"I didn't forget to be at the station when the night train pulled out. I wanted to thank my friend the express agent. He shook hands with me as he clambered on the car and said:

"One good turn deserves another, Drifter. Don't think too harshly of me when you get the news and don't give me away until I have had time to get under cover."

"That crisp \$100 bill which the agent slipped into my hand at English Billy's was part of the proceeds of a touch he had made on the money boxes of the express company. He was a defaulter for several thousand dollars. The news leaked out the next day, but Harry and I had had our meal. Perhaps you can understand now why I never refuse to help a poor devil who says he is hungry."—New York Star.

Columbus Diplomacy.

That Columbus was diplomatic was shown by his first interview with the native chief on the day after he took possession of the western hemisphere in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella.

"So all this land of ours belongs to your king and queen, eh?" demanded the chief, with a sullen look in his eye.

"Yes, my dear fellow," said Columbus, whacking him on the back genially, "but they will make easy landlords. We won't charge you any rent up to this time, and in fact, if you'll be sensible about it we'll let you stay until the 1st of next May at a purely nominal figure."—Harper's Bazar.

The Reason For It.

Men's garments button toward the right side and women's garments usually button toward the left side. This custom dates back to the time when citizens were compelled to go about armed. When a lady took a gentleman's arm, she usually walked on his left side, thus leaving his right arm free to use his sword to defend her. Her left arm was thus at liberty and her garments buttoned from the side opposite from that of the gentleman's in order to suit it.—People's Friend.

A little child of J. R. Hays, living near Colquitt, Ga., overturned a pot of boiling water, scalding itself so severely that the skin came off its breast and limbs. The distressed parents sent to Mr. Rush, a merchant of Colquitt, for a remedy, and he promptly forwarded Chamberlain's Pain Balm. The child was suffering intensely, but was relieved by a single application of the Pain Balm. Another application or two made it sound and well. For sale by Hill-Cox Drug Co.

The Heroes of a Month.

Hon. Theodore Roosevelt writes for the October Century an article entitled "The Roll of Honor of the New York Police." Mr. Roosevelt says:

Perhaps the best way to convey an idea of why we awarded medals is to give a list of the men thus rewarded for two months. In October 1895, we on the 1st of the month awarded a medal to a patrolman for peculiar gallantry in stopping a runaway horse under circumstances which made the act one of great danger to himself and which doubtless resulted in saving the lives of those in the vehicle. The patrolman thus rewarded was also later made a roundsman and put in charge of the bicycle squad, our attention having been first called to him by this act. On the same day we gave honorable mention, but without certificate or medal, to three other officers. One had also stopped a runaway horse, another had rescued a man from drowning and the third had arrested an insane man armed with a revolver under circumstances which went to show that the officer's coolness and presence of mind saved both himself and the onlookers from death or injury at the hands of the armed maniac.

On the 8th of the month we gave medals to an officer who had rescued a boy from drowning by plunging into the water between the wharf and the steamer from which the boy fell at the imminent risk of being crushed to death between the two, fate from which he and the rescue boy were saved purely by his pluck and his skill as a swimmer. Honorable mention was made of two other officers—one for rescuing a boy from drowning and one for stopping a runaway horse. On the 15th yet another officer received honorable mention for saving a man from drowning, and on the 23d a sergeant and two patrolmen were commended for the coolness and skill they displayed in stopping a prizefighter at the spectators, though they were a uncommonly tough crowd at showed immediate fight.

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